



## K-12, higher education, business and industry leaders share support for updated proposal

Wednesday, August 14, 2024

**INDIANAPOLIS** - The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) today [presented](#) a second draft of a proposal to redesign high school diploma requirements to the Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE). The second draft incorporates significant updates, after months of stakeholder feedback, with a focus on rigor and flexibility for students to personalize their high school experience. This is part of the state's ongoing, collaborative effort to rethink the high school experience, making it more learner-centric and future-focused.

"We know that every Indiana student has unique goals and dreams," said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education. "Some want to go to college, some want to kick start their career right after high school, and some want to serve our country by enlisting in one of our nation's military branches. To help us more seamlessly connect our students to their future goals, we have listened to thousands of Hoosiers from around the state to help inform our shared work ahead. This is our opportunity to provide a brighter future for the state of Indiana, and most importantly, our students. So, thank you to the many Hoosiers who have been working with us to get this right for Indiana students. Let's continue to listen and learn from one another, and seize this opportunity, together."

An initial draft of the new diploma rule was first presented to SBOE in March, kicking off the first public comment period designed to enhance the proposed plan. During this time, IDOE and SBOE received more than 8,000 online comments and heard hours of testimony from stakeholders seeking to ensure high school is as valuable as possible for all Indiana students. Feedback emphasized the following key themes:

- Balancing the need for **flexibility and student choice**, while ensuring a **well-rounded education** for all students,
- Ensuring diploma requirements are *rigorous* and *attainable* and **prepare every student for success** regardless of their post-high school plans,
- Elevating the **importance of experiential learning opportunities**, such as work-based learning or a mentorship experience, while increasing **access** and ensuring **safety** for all students, and



- Providing **sufficient resources** needed for school corporations to implement this work statewide.

While the first draft proposal included two diploma options, the revised proposal presented to the SBOE on Wednesday has been streamlined and simplified to include [one base diploma](#) with minimum requirements for every student, as well as the opportunity for students to earn [readiness seals](#) aligned with their unique path.

The proposed base diploma includes increased flexibility and course options for earning credits in core content areas, such as English, math, science, social studies, physical education and health. In addition to these core content areas, students will also take personalized electives which can include a variety of courses, such as career and technical education (CTE courses), performing or fine arts and/or world languages.

To help students focus their coursework in core content areas and electives toward an intentional pathway that connects them to what's next, they will have the option to earn readiness seals in enrollment, employment and/or enlistment. The readiness seals were developed to provide students and parents with a better understanding of a blueprint for success in whatever path a student may choose.

To ensure every student has access to an intentional and rigorous blueprint for success regardless of their path ahead, IDOE worked with external stakeholders to develop two levels for each readiness seal, as recommended by stakeholders:

- **Enrollment honors** and **Enrollment honors plus** seals - Developed with the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, in conjunction with colleges and universities
- **Employment honors** and **Employment honors plus** seals - Developed with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and insights from Ascend Indiana's work with employers, in conjunction with the business representatives across multiple industries
- **Enlistment honors** and **Enlistment honors plus** seals - Developed with the Indiana National Guard, in conjunction with representatives from each military branch, as well as public safety officials

The proposed *honors seals* are similar to the opportunities many Hoosier students have today, such as the current academic honors designation, and are designed to be even more intentional, elevating what truly impacts future success. The *honors plus seals* reflect the opportunities that exist for some Indiana students today, and that Indiana leaders aim to



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Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

expand access for more students across the state. The *honors plus seals* are designed to increase skill development, work-based learning experiences and opportunities for students to increase their educational attainment by earning a credential of value. Under the proposal, students who earn a readiness seal will automatically fulfill all Graduation Pathways requirements. Students who do not earn a seal must still complete components two and three of Graduation Pathways.

At the meeting Wednesday, IDOE shared multiple letters from K-12, higher education, business and industry leaders voicing their support for the new proposal and their appreciation for the collaborative process which led to the revised second draft. The letters of support represent Purdue University, Indiana University, Ivy Tech Community College, Ball State University, Indiana State University, Vincennes University, University of Southern Indiana, the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, the Indiana Association of School Principals, the Indiana School Counselor Association, the Indiana Urban Schools Association, Henriott Risk Management and Insurance and Jasper Engines and Transmissions.

Over the next few weeks, the second draft of the diploma rule will be finalized and posted on the IDOE website. This will kick off a second round of public comment prior to a final draft being presented later this fall. This will include 30 days of public comment, which can be submitted online and via an in-person public hearing. State law requires the SBOE to adopt the new high school diploma rule by December 31, 2024.

Per statute, Indiana's current graduation requirements will sunset October 1, 2028, making final requirements effective for all students beginning with the class of 2029, or students currently in eighth grade. As proposed, schools may opt-in beginning with the 2025-2026 school year. Indiana will also continue to offer the federally-required alternate diploma, which is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

To learn more about the proposed, second draft, click [here](#).

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### **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Molly Williams

Indiana Department of Education

[mowilliams1@doe.in.gov](mailto:mowilliams1@doe.in.gov)

(317) 234-3880